

**Kate Brown**  
Governor



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## **Oregon Commission for Women Announces** **Honorees for Annual Women of Achievement** **Awards**

PORTLAND, Ore. – The Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW) today announced the recipients of the 2020 Women of Achievement Awards. The four honorees are recognized for their dedication to improving the lives of women and girls in Oregon.

This year’s award recipients demonstrated outstanding leadership in promoting equity and diversity opportunities for women within their respective areas of service—civic engagement, education, jobs and economy, and environmental justice. The 2020 awardees will join an impressive list of past awardees, all of whom epitomize the Oregon State motto – “She Flies with Her Own Wings.”

**Laila Hajoo** is co-founder of the Islamic Social Services of Oregon (ISOS), a nonprofit serving and advocating for the needs and rights of Muslim families in Oregon. A fierce advocate and promoter of a host of social justice, public health, racial, ethnic, and religious concerns associated with the identity of Muslim families in Oregon, Laila has played a critical role in establishing the organization's visibility in the State. In her capacity as director, Laila has connected thousands of Muslim families with critical services and acted to raise awareness on the plights of Muslim refugees and immigrants struggling in their process of acculturation into mainstream society. Laila commitment to this community has nurtured a generation of Muslim women leaders and activists through the I-SOS.

In her capacity as a Secretary of the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) Muslim Advisory Council, Laila has educated and empowered the PPB on the issues of gender and religious inequities and racial disparities Muslim girls and women face daily in our communities. Under Laila’s leadership, cultural and equity issues were introduced into the police training on hate crime and barriers to reporting.

**Debra Porta** began volunteering with Pride Northwest, organizers of the annual Portland Pride Waterfront Festival and Parade, while pursuing her Master’s Degree at Portland Community College. Debra eventually served as Board President from 2007 through 2015. Although Debra pursued a career in higher education during that time, the call of Pride remained strong. In late 2016, Debra became the first Executive Director for Pride

### **OR Commission for Women**

#### **Chair:**

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Nancy Kramer, Executive  
Assistant  
Dr. Connie Kim-Gervey,  
Research/ Policy Analyst

Northwest. Under her leadership, Pride Northwest has grown to be a respected organization and Portland Pride a nationally-recognized event.

In all of its messiness, Debra believes strongly in the power of community and engagement. Whether through electoral politics, neighborhood advocacy, or community-building, she is committed to equity and a respect for all of the identities that make up our community.

When not living Pride, Debra serves on the Portland Charter Commission and lives in North Portland with her wife and four-legged children, supporting and advising various grassroots community groups.

**Laura Salerno Owens** is a trial lawyer and the first woman to serve as President of Markowitz Herbold, a boutique litigation firm. As an employment and commercial litigation attorney and leader in her community, Laura seeks out opportunities to promote the status of women in legal and business arenas.

In 2017, Laura created an initiative called Leaders and Executives Across Professions (LEAP) to address the need for mentoring and allyship among C-Level executive women. Laura is also outspoken about matters of gender equality and pay disparity because of her experience as a female trial lawyer. In 2019, she created the presentation “Workplace Equality: a #WeToo Movement,” which focuses on how men can be allies to support women in the workplace.

Laura and her husband David are proud parents to three-year old Mateo and five-year old Gianna. Their new pandemic activity is learning to snowshoe.

**Amira Streeter** currently serves as Natural Resources Policy Advisor to Governor Brown. Her policy portfolio covers a diversity of issues including: agriculture, air and land quality, land use, fish and wildlife, geology, sustainability and environmental justice. In her work, she seeks to advance innovation and community engagement to find solutions to some of the state’s toughest natural resources problems.

Before working for Governor Brown, Amira built her career in the private and nonprofit sectors, serving as a policy director for the late Portland City Commissioner Nick Fish, working for the Urban League of Portland, and serving as a policy analyst and legislative liaison in the House of Representatives.

Amira has a law degree from Lewis & Clark, Northwestern School of Law. A passionate environmentalist, Amira has held many leadership positions over the years with various environmental organizations, including the Environmental Professionals of Color, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club, and Oregon Environmental Council. Her passion is environmental justice, brownfields, and outdoor life.

Awardees will be honored in a virtual ceremony to be held March 19, 2021, to dovetail with Women’s History Month. Safety protocols will be observed for the remote celebration, which will include remarks by Governor Kate Brown.

Since 1985, the OCFW has presented the Women of Achievement Awards to women who are exemplary role models and actively promote the status of women across the state. This year’s

class of awardees continues this tradition with their demonstrated commitment to excellence in serving diverse and historically underrepresented Oregon women.

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The Oregon Commission for Women was legislatively established in 1983 to work for women's equality. The commission does this by advocating for women in the community, providing information on women to the governor and state legislature, serving as a link for women to state agencies, and providing services to individual women in Oregon.

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